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DATE: July 14, 2004

TO: Examiner Jon Chang  
Group Art Unit: 2623

RE: Examiner Interview  
U.S. Patent Application, S.N. 09/475,991  
By: **SAKAI, Kenichiro** .  
Our Reference: P1229-698-A-991522

FROM: George N. Stevens

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**IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE**

In re the Application of: **SAKAI, Kenichiro**

Group Art Unit: **2623**

Serial No.: **09/475,991**

Examiner: **Jon Carlton Chang**

Filed: **December 30, 1999**

P.T.O. Confirmation No.: **7159**

**FOR: DOCUMENT IMAGE PROCESSING DEVICE, DOCUMENT IMAGE MERGING METHOD, AND STORAGE MEDIUM RECORDING A DOCUMENT IMAGE MERGING PROGRAM**

**EXAMINER INTERVIEW**

July 14, 2004

Sir:

The applicant's representative has requested a telephone interview with the Examiner for the above referenced case to take place Thursday, July 15, 2004 at 2PM.

The only claim left in this case which has not been allowed is claim 34. In an attempt to expedite allowance of this case a proposed claim amendment to claim 34 is herein contained. Claim 34 has been amended in a similar manner to claim 32 which is allowed. Therefore, for the same reason as claim 32, claim 34 is in condition for allowance. The Examiner is requested to review proposed claim 34 to determine if it is condition for allowance.

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

**Claim 34 (currently amended):** A document image merging method, comprising:  
partitioning first and second document images among a plurality of document images which are partitioned and read, respectively into a plurality of vertical and horizontal regions;

extracting line images containing only character images from the plurality of vertical and horizontal regions partitioned;

comparing between the number of line images containing only character images in the plurality of regions vertically partitioned and the number of such line images found in the plurality of regions horizontally partitioned, and judging the plurality of regions that hold more line images found to contain only character images as a low graphics-ratio region;

detecting an overlapping position between the first and second document images based on positions of the extracted line image whose matching degrees are high by making a comparison between a character region of a line image in a region ~~containing a plurality of line images, of a plurality of regions in the first document image~~ judged as the low graphics-ratio region and a character region of a line image in a corresponding region of the second document image; and

merging the first and second document images at the detected overlapping position.